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President: Mr. Diogo Freitas do Amaral . . . . . (Portugal)

In the absence of the President, Mr. Odlum (Saint Lucia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

The meeting was called to order at 3.20 p.m.

Agenda item 23 (*continued*)

Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields

Report of the Secretary-General (A/50/697 and Add.1)

Note by the Secretariat (A/50/271)

Mr. Alhadad (Indonesia): Let me begin by expressing, on behalf of my delegation, our sincere appreciation to the Secretary-General for his report on this important agenda item. I would also like to thank the representative of the Philippines for her clear statement on behalf of the Group of 77 on this item, which indeed reflects the basic views of my delegation.

The revitalization of the role of the United Nations in the economic and social spheres is, as my delegation has long emphasized, a top priority. We are challenged to rebuild the stature of the Organization, reassess its mandate and equip the international community with an adequate and democratic mechanism for tackling difficult development challenges in the years ahead.

However, as the process has continued, it has become obvious that efforts are being made by certain countries to shift the role of the United Nations in the development field to other economic institutions outside the Organization. This development in particular has become one of major concern to the developing countries, for it threatens the very efficacy of the United Nations and could undermine its efforts to promote the global economy and the international economic relations that are so vitally important to their development process.

Vesting increased power and influence in these institutions, in which all countries are not equal in the decision-making process, is bound to have serious economic consequences. Furthermore, few will disagree that in recent years it has become clear that national and international approaches to the development process are being undermined, or at least vastly modified, by many new approaches. The argument behind these approaches is essentially that development efforts are best left to market forces and mechanisms, as well as to private initiatives, which leaves Governments with only a minimal role to play.

While we can certainly acknowledge the importance of the private sector's involvement in the development field, many of the new approaches have led to the perception that there is less of a role for the inclusion and coordination of traditional development issues within the framework of the United Nations. Thus, the notion has emerged that the United Nations has little or no comparative advantage in dealing with development issues

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and that its role and functions should be revalued and reduced accordingly.

Given such negative trends, my delegation attaches great importance to the discussion on restructuring and revitalization. The central purpose of the restructuring exercise, as stipulated in General Assembly resolution 45/177, was to ensure the more effective and efficient functioning of the intergovernmental machinery of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields. This should also help the Organization in responding to the need for enhancing international cooperation for development. Moreover, the efforts to strengthen this unique and paramount role of the United Nations have become, as we are reminded in resolution 48/162, even more imperative in the present context of rapidly changing times and the transformation of global relationships. Our basic challenge at this fiftieth session of the General Assembly is therefore to review the implementation of resolutions 48/162 and 45/177 for the purpose of enhancing the role of the United Nations in the economic and social fields in order to promote international cooperation for development.

In this exercise of restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations, one must bear in mind the unique characteristics of the United Nations system, including its democratic principle of equal representation. In this respect, it would be regrettable if in the conduct of the exercise such principles were ignored and if it were directed by the views of only a very few countries.

It has long been an assumption of my delegation that in order to successfully restructure and revitalize the United Nations, which is characterized by its universality and neutrality, the options and positions of all its Member States should be fully taken into consideration. In this way, all Member States would have a sense of ownership and belonging, which would contribute greatly towards strengthening the Organization.

On the other hand, however, I believe that if the voices of only a few countries are heard, such a process would prove to be counterproductive. It is well recognized that certain countries can have an undue influence in persuading others to accept their arguments; such a situation can easily undermine the feeling of being in the same boat with the same captain and charting the future course of the world economy and global economic relations for the well-being of all.

When we adopted resolution 48/162, we did so in the full understanding and hope that all its provisions would be fully implemented in the spirit of partnership. In the initial stages of implementation our hopes ran high, as steps were indeed being taken to improve the working relationship between the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and their subsidiary bodies, thus enhancing their complementarity.

As to the framework of the General Assembly, we welcome the fact that the agenda and discussions of the Second Committee have been streamlined and strengthened so as to sharpen the focus of the Committee, as well as that of the General Assembly as the highest intergovernmental deliberative mechanism of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields.

In the framework of the Economic and Social Council, the method of work has been agreed upon and implemented to ensure that economic and social issues are addressed in the most comprehensive sense of the term, as mandated in the Charter. Steps are also being considered to establish working procedures within the functional commissions to ensure that their work programmes complement each other in their quest to implement the agreements and commitments adopted at recent United Nations conferences.

Needless to say, within the context of funds and programmes, Member States are also working hard to devise a working method that will fit the functions for which they are responsible in the provision of intergovernmental support and supervision of the activities of each fund and programme, in accordance with the overall policy guidance of the Assembly and the Council.

Consequently, I would not hesitate to add that in these institutional aspects there is obviously a deep commitment to implement the provisions of resolution 48/162. Though a number of steps may still be required to improve the coherence of the Main Committees of the General Assembly, as well as that of the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies, my delegation is convinced that we are moving in the right direction.

Having said that, I am sure the Assembly will agree that most of the developing countries are deeply disappointed by the results of the consultations on new modalities for funding operational activities for development. Such consultations constitute an important element of consensus resolution 48/162, the provisions of

which obviously imply that, as part of the overall reform process, there is a dire need for a substantial increase in the resources for operational activities for development on a predictable, continuous and assured basis. However, the consultations spanning the last two years have not attracted the necessary political willingness and have thus achieved no substantive progress. Inevitably, therefore, the developing countries will continue to be impaired by the expected cutbacks in the resources for operational activities for development. This situation is certainly detrimental to the prospects of achieving our objectives in the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations role in the economic, social and related fields.

Resolution 48/162, including its annex, is an integrated resolution which requires the full implementation of all its provisions without exception. The selective implementation of its provisions would, we believe, be counterproductive and contrary to the spirit of the resolution.

While my delegation is fully committed to participating actively and constructively in future consultations on new modalities for funding for operational activities for development, we believe that what is now crucial is the political will and determination of all parties on how best to arrest the downward spiral of resources for development. I should mention in this context that the developing countries have kept their side of the partnership agreement in resolution 48/162, but, regrettably, a *quid pro quo* in terms of funding has not been forthcoming from our developed partners. We could agree that any new funding system that may be devised should facilitate all participants' demonstrating their commitments to the programmes and funds and should ensure the predictability and continuity of such resources, in keeping with the spirit of resolution 48/162. One such system that should be explored, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, is that of multi-year negotiated pledges. Obviously, such exploration should not preclude a vigorous search for other options. We trust that the next round of consultations will seriously address and focus on various options for funding.

In conclusion, while my delegation has focused mainly on resolution 48/162, we should not let this opportunity go by without offering a few brief comments on the need for cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions. We strongly support the efforts to increase the coherence and coordination between the work and activities of the United Nations and those of the Bretton Woods institutions. I would therefore like to stress that, in accordance with the provisions of the Charter, the United Nations was always intended to play a holistic, over arching role in the economic, social and humanitarian fields. We cannot deny that this would certainly include the activities of the Bretton Woods institutions. Indeed, from the very beginning, the Bretton Woods institutions were supposed to be fully coordinated with the United Nations orbit of activity. But, in reality, they have drifted further away from the Organization's influence, keeping their distance, as it were, from the United Nations. As a result, the United Nations has had little or no direct impact on the policies and activities of these institutions. In my delegation's view, if we are to achieve success in our efforts to restructure and revitalize the United Nations role in the economic, social and related fields, our ultimate objective should be to bring the Bretton Woods institutions into line with the policies of the United Nations system, thereby strengthening their universality and equitable representation.

Realistically speaking, within the context of institutional reforms, the Bretton Woods institutions and the United Nations could enhance their cooperation by increasing the number of relevant briefings and reports presented by the Bretton Woods institutions, especially in the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. This input could then become part and parcel of the ongoing intergovernmental deliberations. Obviously, as already suggested by the Group of 77, such reports could be discussed during the high-level segment of the Economic and Social Council. I should add that no matter what mechanism is utilized for these purposes, the point remains that increased cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions is not only timely and valid, it is also clearly imperative.

Mr. Cassar (Malta): The international tension emanating from armed conflict, economic imbalances and social dislocation, so evident in recent years, has demonstrated that global economic and social development should constitute ends in themselves in the furtherance of international peace and security for all States, nations and peoples. Committed reform and revitalization of the United Nations system is a prerequisite for the attainment of this objective.

Reform of the United Nations is of the utmost urgency, given the negative public perceptions of its credibility and viability. Criticism is perhaps unjustified when we consider the increasing complexity of issues demanding attention from the Organization. The United Nations is clearly lacking the resources to perform its

assigned tasks. Yet demands for immediate, result-oriented action are increasing daily. The expectations of Governments and peoples alike are rising concurrently. However, pressures to deliver compounded by overlapping mandates, operational and structural duplication and fragmentation, a divergence between national and global interests and priorities and a reluctance by some to alter the prevailing *modus operandi*.

The peoples that have for so long aspired to live in peace, freedom, prosperity and dignity justifiably demand to reap the peace dividend.

A conceptual rethinking of the notion of international security, which is multidimensional and indivisible, has influenced our times.

A comprehensive redefinition of the roles of, and the relationship between, all the United Nations principal organs, subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies, has been recognized as fundamental. The overall process of restructuring and revitalization being undertaken is crucial. Otherwise we would risk condemning the United Nations to death by irrelevance.

Reforming the United Nations to make it both more efficient and relevant to contemporary realities and needs calls for a balanced and complementary working relationship within the broader institutional framework of the United Nations system. Presiding over the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly, immediately after the end of the cold war, Malta's Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, Professor Guido de Marco, stressed that successful reform of the United Nations system has to be conceptual, structural and operational.

My delegation therefore appreciates and acknowledges the tireless efforts of the Secretary-General in responding to the mandate in resolution 45/264 in this regard. The Secretary-General's report under consideration reflects the commendable efforts undertaken so far by the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary bodies and specialized agencies to harmonize and integrate their operational and procedural activities. The recommendations being made within the framework of the agenda for development, including the coordination of the common themes of the major international conferences, are clearly a major step forward in ensuring the effectiveness of the United Nations. My delegation particularly welcomes the priority given by the Economic and Social Council and the Ad Hoc Open-ended Working Group of the General Assembly on an Agenda for Development to strengthen the relationship between the Organization and the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

There is still much scope and need for increased and improved coordination and complementarity between the various United Nations programmes and funds with overlapping mandates at the field and country levels. A rational division of labour should be pursued to avoid duplication and waste. Member States must guarantee a financially viable United Nations. Concerted efforts must also continue to be made to coordinate national and multilateral development strategies in order to achieve genuine international cooperation and partnership in development. The role of the Economic and Social Council as the leading coordinating and policy-integrating body of the United Nations system in the economic and social fields, as originally intended in the Charter, must be strengthened. This entails a reassessment and rationalization of its working relationship with the General Assembly if duplication of work and multiple consideration of similar issues is to be avoided, and the Organization's cost-effectiveness and efficacy is to increase.

A holistic and comprehensive approach to development cannot ignore the issue of environmental security. Our commitment to reform must therefore also include consideration of the workings of our Organization in this field. We are concerned about the current lack of coordination between respective organs which deal with closely related environmental problems but which continue to work independently despite their overlapping mandates. Though each aspect requires specific attention, the intrinsic linkage between these different issues demands unison in effort if we are to ensure a world that is environmentally safe and sustainable.

My Government is of the firm belief that the process of introspection and deliberation should move constructively to a process of committed implementation and action. The momentum of reform generated by changes in the international system over the last five years must not be allowed to lose ground. The complexity of contemporary economic, social and environmental problems requires solutions stemming from an innovative, yet pragmatic approach. We must continue to build onto the structures we have inherited while implementing change at the same time. Continuity does not preclude change. Change is often a painful process but it is change that has motivated human endeavour and achievement. The challenges ahead of us are enormous. But with our collective commitment to reform, the United

Nations can really succeed in fulfilling the aspirations of all men and women, of present and future generations, to live in peace, freedom and dignity.

By responding to the challenge of change with genuine political courage and conviction we can truly build a second-generation United Nations — a second-generation United Nations that is flexible, relevant, efficient and credible and that carries within it the continuity of the vision of our founding fathers to create the conditions for international peace and security.

Mr. Koe Ntonga (Cameroon)(*interpretation from French*): The proposed restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social and related fields, item 23 of our agenda, will rank among the decisions testifying to the wise desire of the Member States to adapt the Organization to the world's geopolitical and social and economic context.

The decision to engage in restructuring and revitalization is part of an overall policy initiated some years ago at all levels by the General Assembly to enable the Organization to respond better to the strategic objectives and imperatives defined by the Member States.

Indeed, 50 years after its founding, and facing the continuing economic and financial crisis that gravely undermines individual and collective development efforts and is a destabilizing factor for young States and for international peace and security, the United Nations is duty-bound to play a more active, indeed a central, role in promoting economic, social and cultural cooperation in accordance with the purposes and principles of the Charter.

As His Excellency Mr. Ferdinand-Leopold Oyono, Minister for Foreign Affairs of Cameroon, stated in his address on 5 October of this year during the Assembly's general debate:

> "Development is primarily the responsibility of the States and the peoples concerned. Cameroon nevertheless believes that the United Nations should, because of its universality and in the best interest of the international community as a whole, help to ensure global solidarity and interdependence with a view to promoting development for all." *(Official Records of the General Assembly, Fiftieth Session, Plenary Meetings, 21st Meeting, p. 21).*

My delegation consequently would like to reaffirm Cameroon's unreserved support for the decision on the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic and social fields, not only because of its relevance to the present trend towards reform, but also because, from the point of view of the Government of Cameroon, economic and development issues have, indeed must have, the same priority as political and peace-keeping issues, to which they are directly and inextricably linked.

The Secretary-General, in his report of 6 May 1994 on An Agenda for Development noted:

> "Development is a fundamental human right. Development is the most secure basis for peace." *(A/48/935, para. 3)*

My delegation pays tribute to the Secretary-General and to the Chairman of the consultation process on prospective new modalities for funding operational activities for development, whose excellent reports offer a comprehensive but also detailed understanding of the question, making it possible to identify the main problems posed by the inevitable, though lengthy and arduous, carrying out this undertaking.

A member of the Organization of African Unity (OAU), the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, Cameroon, a middle-income country, has in the past few years accepted and implemented structural adjustment programmes set up with the assistance of international financial institutions and donors from the wealthier countries. Though it bears a heavy debt burden, Cameroon endorses, and has actively contributed to, the views and proposals of these various parties on the subject of restructuring.

Cameroon considers the following aspects to be indispensable factors that contribute to, facilitate and ensure the success of the proposed restructuring and revitalization.

First and foremost, resources must be mobilized to fund operational activities for development.It is a truism to say that without the financial resources that are the backbone of the process, the United Nations will not be able to undertake and discharge the mission of economic, social and cultural development and progress assigned to it. Moreover, the Chairman's report (A/50/271) on new modalities for the funding of operational activities for development and the declaration of the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77, adopted at their ninetieth annual meeting, held in

New York on 29 September last, emphasize that these resources should be allocated by donors on a continuous, predictable and secure basis. Unfortunately, we have witnessed in the last few years a continuous erosion of official development assistance and of private investment, which could have enabled the various organs of the United Nations and recipient countries to implement the proposed development programmes. In addition, we cannot but deplore the reduction in United Nations budgetary resources earmarked for international cooperation programmes for development.

Likewise, there is an urgent need to stabilize the financial situation of the Organization through the payment of contributions and arrears by all Member States. For its part, and despite its difficult economic and financial conditions, Cameroon, like other developing countries and African ones in particular, confirming its political will and joining in the expansion of the lofty ideals of the United Nations, recently paid up nearly all its arrears in contributions due the Organization.

Because of the economic difficulties that I have referred to, priority should be given to the critical economic situation of Africa and to an increase in budgetary resources earmarked for the "45 Africa" programmes and the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, whose relevance and urgency which have been recognized by all. Greater budgetary resources should therefore be mandated by the General Assembly to ensuring the implementation of these programmes, thereby contributing to the development of the continent.

In the view of my delegation, good management and working methods on the part of the various United Nations organs and agencies dealing specifically with economic and development issues are a guarantee of the success of efforts to restructure and revitalize the Organization.

The adoption and future implementation of the prototype for the new format of the medium-term plan for the period 1998 to 2001, the introduction of a transparent and efficient system of accountability and responsibility, and the decentralization of regional economic commissions and of social and economic activities: all these are reform measures that foster administrative and financial efficiency in the Organization in the economic and social spheres.

But the structures created can be only as good as the people put in charge of them. Therefore we are in favour of a Secretariat equipped with adequate structures and a qualified staff that reflects the diversity and rich experience of the peoples of the United Nations.

Moreover, the General Assembly, in my delegation's view, should continue to be the driving force and a global forum for the expression and harmonization of the positions of Member States, in particular in the sphere of promoting economic, social and cultural cooperation, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter.

Finally, Cameroon remains convinced that the ongoing reform of the various Executive Boards should be conducted so as to reconcile the requirement of effectiveness with the imperative of democratization, while at all times bearing in mind the threefold concern of non-conditionality, transparency and neutrality which underpins operational activities for development within the United Nations system.

Mr. Fowler (Canada) (*interpretation from French*): The text of my statement that will be circulated to Members this afternoon will be more complete than the version I will present now.

Canada believes that a healthy United Nations is essential to a world in which international stability and sustainable development reign. The importance we attach to the United Nations is the very reason why we are so keenly interested in the renewal of the United Nations system. We want to enhance the effectiveness of the Organization and better prepare it to meet the challenges that lie ahead. Rarely has this issue seemed so pertinent to Canada as it does now. Rarely also have the prospects for agreement on change, based on common goals, seemed so favourable.

Canada considers it important that the United Nations system operate cost-effectively in the economic and social fields, for a number of reasons. We are living in an era of interdependence, our futures are intertwined, and environmental preoccupations are more than ever determining factors in the security and well-being of peoples. It is therefore important to have effective multilateral institutions. The challenge, of course, is to adapt our institutions to future needs and to chart a course for the future that builds on our assets and fosters partnerships that can better harness the considerable capacities that have been developed in other organizations. Our objective is to increase the relevance and the credibility of the United Nations in the economic and social sectors by enhancing its effectiveness.

On this fiftieth anniversary of the establishment of the United Nations, there are ample opportunities for renewal. We should build on them all. I have in mind the triennial policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations system; the follow-up to the World Summit for Social Development and the Fourth World Conference on Women; the Agenda for Development; and consideration by the High-Level Open-Ended Working Group on the Strengthening of the United Nations System of a series of proposals on reform and renewal. Despite the array of mechanisms for considering the potential for change, each is not an isolated track. The initiatives I have just mentioned should instead complement each other in shaping a coherent view of how the United Nations can better respond to the expectations of the international community. In the present context, the present debate on revitalization can make a particular contribution by affording us the opportunity to consider how the Economic and Social Council can discharge its responsibilities more effectively.

(*Spoke in English*)

The economic and social agenda is long and complicated. More than ever before, the activities of the United Nations must be more clearly focused and effectively interconnected with other parts of the system. In our view, the Economic and Social Council must evolve into the body primarily responsible for putting this coordination into practice. This is the role that was envisaged for it in the United Nations Charter 50 years ago. This evolution of the Council will be brought about only with a number of modifications and additions. First, we need to examine the functioning of the Council's substantive session. Each piece of the United Nations system must have a distinct role. Functional commissions were designed to be centres of oversight and direction. Specialized agencies can offer opportunities for norm-setting. The General Assembly is the ultimate authority on policy, while major conferences contribute to policy development. Given these realities, the natural role of the Economic and Social Council is that of coordinator. And coordination should be its overarching objective. The Council should provide the United Nations system with cross-sectoral coordination and overall guidance for operational activities, including the setting of objectives and the establishment of priorities and strategies across the system.

The structure of the sessions of the Economic and Social Council needs to be revisited in keeping with this objective of coordination. The high-level segment must address emerging issues of significance in the economic and social fields. The objective should be to identify important areas of work and issues on which greater coordination is required. The Council can also benefit from the insights offered by the Bretton Woods and multilateral-trade institutions. In order for the policy exchange to be meaningful, themes should be of broad interest and should be selected on the basis of appropriate consultations. And, we should ensure that the President of the Economic and Social Council and the Secretary-General see that the governing bodies of these institutions are made fully cognizant of emerging conclusions, in order that they might play their full part in follow-up activities.

The bulk of the time of the Economic and Social Council should be spent in the coordination and operational-activities segments. With a thematic focus, the Council must look at the work of its functional commissions, of the specialized agencies and of the funds and programmes. It must then make recommendations to address areas where there is overlapping and duplication and adjust coordination processes as required. To this end, part of the discussions that have formed the general segment could be refocused and included in the coordination segment. The balance of the general segment could be left to the General Assembly for further consideration. We must eliminate repetitive debates — there is no need for issues to be reviewed by both bodies.

Canada would suggest two further changes in the way in which the Economic and Social Council does business. First, it should meet in shorter, more frequent, sessions. Secondly, we should create an expanded Bureau primarily for improving the preparation of meetings and for focusing the Council's agenda. The Bureau could in turn report its findings and recommendations to the whole of the Council's membership in the context of the organizational session.

At the Economic and Social Council this year, we agreed that it would be useful for the functional commissions to develop multi-year programmes of work. This would facilitate the eventual harmonization of work programmes across commissions, which would, in turn, facilitate the Council's role as coordinator. We should, in particular, take advantage of any planned reviews, such as that of the Commission on the Status of Women in 1996 and the Commission on Sustainable Development in 1997, in order to encourage greater harmonization. Also at the Economic and Social Council, we agreed to review the mandates of functional commissions based on the

scope of their work. This would facilitate consideration of appropriate adjustments and consolidations. The results of recent major conferences suggest the importance of reviewing and/or refocusing the work of the Commission for Social Development. In addition, we believe it would be useful to examine the possibility of consolidating all work on population issues under the Commission on Population and Development, including that which was foreseen for coverage by the Commission on Sustainable Development before the Cairo Conference. Finally, we would like to review the structure and focus of a number of commissions related to natural resources.

Our agreed conclusions from the coordination segment of the Economic and Social Council touched on another issue — the importance of creating a stronger link between substantive programming and coordination, and the budgeting process. In theory, of course, this describes the role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC). But in practice, the potential of the CPC has not been realized. We may decide that the CPC need not continue. At a minimum, we question the usefulness of the present arrangement of joint meetings between the CPC and the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC).

The size and intricacy of the United Nations system complicate decision-making at the centre. We need to use all mechanisms at our disposal to improve the transparency of the system to ensure that we can make well-informed decisions. We could start with two specific cases. We have all agreed on the importance of enhancing coordination with and between the regional commissions. We should also ensure that the regional commissions provide value-added. A point of departure would be to ask each of the regional commissions to produce detailed work programmes, including an indication of the value-added they bring to their members and how these benefits relate to the budget priorities. We must use this 48/162 process to ask for a full review of their work.

Another example is the invaluable data collection and analysis function of the United Nations system. Without a clear picture of what is being studied, and where and by whom, we are unable to synthesize all information available in a way that contributes to a better understanding of the state of economic and social development. We need to address this issue squarely, particularly given our agreed conclusions from the Economic and Social Council on the subject of reporting.

The last set of issues that we would like to address today is those related to coordination within the United Nations system and cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions.

We would like to applaud the initiative of the Secretary-General to create thematic task forces with participation from across the United Nations system and the Bretton Woods institutions. It is important that these be seen as flexible mechanisms, rather than as permanent structures. With experience, we may find they work well, or perhaps not, and we may find they need to alter their focus — possibly in the direction of more narrow themes. It is our hope that they will contribute to the work of functional commissions that are dealing with related themes.

Specifically with respect to mechanisms for cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions, we were pleased at the participation of the Secretary-General in the recent meetings of the Development Committee of the World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Cooperation between secretariats can be deepened at both the headquarters and field levels. Post-crisis response is an area that requires particular attention and at an early date. The Agenda for Development discussions make provision for addressing these issues in greater depth.

We must demonstrate to our publics our collective commitment to updating the Organization and preparing it to meet the challenges of the next century. Let us not waste this important opportunity.

Mr. Aass (Norway): General Assembly resolution 48/162 represented a landmark in the ongoing process of the revitalization and strengthening of the United Nations in the economic and social fields. It has facilitated a closer and more continuous dialogue between Member States and United Nations funds and programmes. The resolution stressed the need for reform of the financing of the operational activities of the United Nations, but we are disappointed and concerned about the slow follow-up in this field. The resolution also initiated important reforms of the Economic and Social Council, although much more needs to be done in that area.

Norway welcomes the opportunity to assess the progress made in the implementation of the recommendations of resolution 48/162. But we must do more than mere stock-taking. We must bring the process forward and find consensus solutions on the outstanding issues.

Allow me to comment briefly on the question of Executive Boards and on financing reform, before turning to issues regarding the Economic and Social Council.

First, concerning the matter of Executive Boards for the funds and programmes, the Nordic countries were the key initiators of the governance reform of the United Nations funds and programmes. Norway is by and large pleased with the way resolution 48/162 has been followed up in the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). We also welcome the introduction of an Executive Board in the World Food Programme from next year.

The new Executive Boards have led to a closer and more continuous dialogue between Member countries and the secretariats of the funds and programmes. We now have clearer guidance from Member States on a year-round basis. In short, governance reform has created a more action-oriented and businesslike setting for decision-making. We believe there is scope for further improvements in the working methods of the Executive Boards, and we will follow this up in the relevant bodies.

Norway supported the introduction of separate segments for UNDP and UNFPA issues, respectively, in their joint Executive Board, as well as a joint segment for common issues. We believe that this reform has made it easier for the Board to devote adequate attention to the most important issues. Given this background, we do not see the need for a separate UNFPA board. We have noted the statement to this effect by the Executive Director of the UNFPA, Ms. Nafis Sadik, at the last UNFPA/UNDP Board meeting.

I turn now to the question of the funding of United Nations operational activities for development cooperation. Resolution 48/162 called for improvements in the funding system of United Nations operational activities for development cooperation. My Government is disappointed at the limited progress made in this area. We appreciate, however, the two reports presented by the Secretary-General on the funding of the operational activities of the United Nations, which we believe represent a good basis for deliberations among Member countries.

We regret the lack of commitment by all Member States to secure the funding for development activities. All countries share the responsibility to equip the United Nations with sufficient resources. In particular, there should be improved burden-sharing between donors. Therefore, we must strengthen our efforts to secure a predictable, continued and assured funding system which preferably would increase the resource base for United Nations development activities.

The Nordic countries have previously presented an alternative three-tier funding system based on assessed contributions by all Member countries, multi-year negotiated pledges and voluntary contributions. My Government still believes that this model should be among the options for future consideration. At the same time, we are ready to consider other proposals for securing a sound and stable resource base. Such alternatives could include an assessment of new and innovative funding mechanisms. One option could be the proposal to introduce international taxes, such as transport taxes on air tickets and other proposals, to supplement the income of the Organization, *inter alia* for the funding of parts of the operational activities of the United Nations.

Let me emphasize, though, that innovative funding schemes such as international taxes can only be a supplement to the regular funding of the activities of the United Nations. Funding of the United Nations must primarily remain the responsibility of Member countries.

Finally, I would like to address the question of the Economic and Social Council. Norway believes that the Economic and Social Council at present fails to fulfil its mandate. In particular, there is a need to strengthen the Council's coordination and policy guidance role. We acknowledge that some improvements have been made. Nevertheless, much more needs to be done if the role of the Economic and Social Council is to be strengthened.

In the short run, it is important to identify more suitable thematic issues for the various segments in order to avoid repetitious debates. Issues should be selected early enough to allow for timely preparation of documentation. There is also a need to review the clustering of items to distinguish better between issues for formal approval on the one hand and issues for deliberation on the other. It is also necessary to discuss ways and means of tackling the documentation crisis. Maybe the crisis is systemic and caused by both Governments and the Secretariat. But something can be done: documents should be shortened, they should be more action-oriented, and they should contain one-page executive summaries specifying the action required by the Council. And they must be issued on time. We also encourage joint reporting from the United Nations system

on specific items. There should be improved feedback on problems and bottlenecks to the coordinators at the field level.

There is also a need to discuss far-reaching, longer-term proposals which merit a more comprehensive analysis. Is there a need to discuss every year reports from all the subsidiary bodies of the Economic and Social Council, or could some reports could be taken up every second or third year? We also welcome further deliberations on how to avoid repetitious debates in the subsidiary bodies, the Economic and Social Council and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly. Surely not all reports need to be forwarded through the Economic and Social Council to the General Assembly.

Norway believes that the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council should be shortened rather than lengthened. A summer session of four weeks, covering all segments including the high-level segment, should be sufficient and attainable. With regard to the general segment, consideration should be given to whether it would be possible to restructure it and shorten it to one week. Some of the less substantive items could be dealt with in a restructured organizational session.

Another interesting proposal worth our consideration is that the Economic and Social Council's Bureau be given an expanded role throughout the year. We look forward to hearing the views of others on the question of the format and functions of an extended Bureau.

There is also a need to review the role of the high-level segment, as well as the status of the deliberations of that segment. Better use should be made of Ministers' presence at the Economic and Social Council. We find the proposal that the high-level segment be shifted to the end of the Council session interesting.

Economic and social issues have always been a corner-stone in the work of the United Nations. The fiftieth session of the General Assembly represents a welcome opportunity to strengthen the Organization's machinery in this field. We have listened attentively, and we look forward to hearing the suggestions of those representatives who have yet to speak and to working with others to move the ongoing reform process forward.

Mr. Sengwe (Zimbabwe): My delegation is pleased to participate in the consideration of agenda item 23. I wish to associate myself fully with the statement made by the representative of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77 and China.

In addition to the search for and the maintenance of international peace and security, the United Nations is mandated by its Charter to employ international machinery for the promotion of the economic and social advancement of all peoples. In order to achieve these goals, we the Members, individually and collectively, should underwrite the development activities of the United Nations with adequate resources, on a continuous, predictable and assured basis.

In the past few years much has already been accomplished in restructuring the governance of the United Nations programmes and funds. At the risk of stating the obvious, I wish to say that we do not seek reform in the economic, social and related fields for its own sake, but consider this exercise to be a vital, integral part of a broader process encompassing revitalization of the General Assembly, reform of the Bretton Woods institutions and democratization of the Security Council.

Regrettably, however, the reformist zeal has not been matched by equal enthusiasm to arrest and reverse the persistent decline in resources for United Nations operational activities. In the negotiations that led to the reduction in the membership of the Executive Boards, we were made to believe that such restructuring would lead to a substantial increase in resources for operational funds and programmes.

Reforms should be action- and result-oriented. In this respect, we wish to point out that no amount of institutional restructuring can substitute for the necessary increase in the resource base of the United Nations. Some members of this Assembly constantly lecture us on the beauty of and the absolute need for smaller Governing Boards for the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund. The same arguments are being advanced in the discussion on reform of the Security Council. The same group of countries has argued that smaller or leaner Boards, as well as being more beautiful, would facilitate decision-making. Well, we are still assessing the impact of changes introduced so far.

My country is gravely concerned not only at the erosion of the developing countries' participation in the decision-making of the governing Boards of the United Nations specialized agencies but also at the lack of coordination between the activities of the United Nations

and those of the Bretton Woods institutions. As part of the United Nations family, these international financial institutions were not established to be parallels of or to compete with the other organs of the United Nations. Rather, they were set up in the context of the United Nations, and they therefore need to report and be accountable to this Assembly, like the other principal organs of the United Nations.

It is a matter of considerable concern to my delegation, therefore, that in the difficult negotiations leading to the adoption of resolution 48/162, reform of the Bretton Woods institutions was successfully resisted by some members in our midst. Instead, we hear that this item was high on the agenda of the June Summit of the Group of Seven — the industrialized countries. My delegation submits that the proper forum for considering this important question is the General Assembly, where all countries are represented on an equal basis. We hope that the forthcoming negotiations on the Agenda for Development will address the question of the accountability of the Bretton Woods institutions and the coordination of their activities with those of other United Nations organs.

A number of delegations — notably those of Spain on behalf of the European Union, Japan, the United States and Canada — referred to the need to set up an expanded Bureau for the Economic and Social Council. We are not convinced that there is a compelling reason to embark on this course. My delegation is not convinced that we can find a cure for our shortcomings and lack of political will through an interminable process of reform. Judging by the historical record and by our experience of the Security Council, we have no doubt that the establishment of another exclusive club, in the context of the Economic and Social Council, is not advisable. Democratic decision-making — not exclusivity — should be our goal.

Mr. Ziauddin (Bangladesh): It is a great honour for me to address this meeting of the plenary as we discuss the very important agenda item before us, "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields". My delegation fully supports the views expressed on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. The Secretary-General's report in document A/50/697 has provided useful inputs for our discussion. My delegation is deeply committed to the principles of restructuring, as stated in resolutions 45/264 and 48/162, and has taken note of the progress made in the implementation of these two resolutions.

My delegation believes that the mandated role of the United Nations in the field of economic and social development, as envisaged in the Charter, remains to be wholly fulfilled. In recent years we have observed with deep concern that development has been largely bypassed. The Organization and its budget have been focused more on peace and security issues and short-term emergency issues. This phenomenon is rather frustrating, given the promise of the post-cold-war scenario. During this fiftieth-anniversary session we are faced with the question of how to refocus our attention on pressing issues of development arising out of globalization. Any restructuring and revitalization exercise has to be able to address the crucial issues of international trade, finance, debt and technology transfer.

General Assembly resolution 48/162 is very clear on the question of resources for operational activities for development. However, the recent trend of decreasing allocations is quite contrary to the provisions on resources that were agreed upon and supported by all. It is also relevant in this context to refer to the agreed menu of official-development-assistance targets as a percentage of gross domestic product to be devoted to economic and social development. At a time when the world economy is on its way to a broad-based recovery, it is difficult to rationalize the dwindling of external financing for the developing countries. My delegation would like to reiterate that increased allocation of resources is a crucial component of the overall reform process.

The General Assembly, as the supreme policy-making organ of the United Nations, must play the leading role in promoting economic and social development. The contributions of the Second and Third Committees can bring about integration in the global economy and enhance international socio-economic development cooperation. We can further pursue the rationalization of the various agenda items before these two Committees, including their clustering, biennialization and triennialization. The general debate in the Second Committee remains an important segment; however, we have to develop the use of its outcome as a policy tool, and we therefore support the idea of agreed conclusions in this regard.

This year's session of the Economic and Social Council has been very useful in terms of addressing key issues of our concern. Its new format proves to be more functional for coordination and policy-guidance purposes. More work can be done to strengthen the Council in order to ensure its effectiveness and increased relevance.

The idea of having the high-level segment at the end and merging other high-level segments is worth examining. In addition, my delegation is flexible on the idea of a high-level inter-sessional mechanism for the Economic and Social Council so long as its work remains open-ended and transparent. In any rationalization exercise, we should be careful to avoid duplication of work between the general segment of the Council and the Second and Third Committees of the General Assembly.

The work of the functional commissions remains very important for the promotion of social, economic and environmental development. Many of these commissions work in overlapping fields, and we therefore have to pursue harmonization and coordination, taking maximum advantage of their competence in different fields under their respective mandates. These functional commissions, along with the regional economic commissions, can contribute a great deal towards implementing the programmes of action adopted in the recently concluded major United Nations conferences. The work of the Administrative Committee on Coordination can be further improved for better inter-agency coordination, including in the task of following up major conferences. The role of the Committee for Programme and Coordination can be further strengthened so that the Economic and Social Council benefits from its interaction with that Committee.

In conclusion, I would like to touch on the issue of cooperation between the United Nations, the Bretton Woods institutions and the newly constituted World Trade Organization. Discussions on modalities of interaction between these institutions can be further pursued. The policy dialogue of the high-level segment of this year's session of the Economic and Social Council has been very helpful. However, we must strive for more concrete results from such interaction. A similar policy dialogue could also take place during the general debate of the Second Committee. Under our discussions on "An Agenda for Development", we would elaborate mechanisms for increasing cooperation, which would ultimately contribute to strengthening the United Nations, particularly in the economic and social development fields.

Mr. Meléndez-Barahona (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): I have the honour to participate in the debate on agenda item 23, "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields", on behalf of the following Central American countries: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua and Panama.

At the outset, I wish to say that we align ourselves with the statement made by the Permanent Mission of the Philippines to the United Nations on behalf of the Group of 77 and China. We thank the Secretary-General for his report in document A/50/697, in which he details the progress made on this issue and makes suggestions and recommendations for further improvements in the economic and social fields.

For Central America, restructuring in the economic, social and related fields falls within the larger process of the overall reform of the United Nations, particularly in this case, where the goal is to strengthen and revitalize the work of the Organization in priority areas aimed at creating better conditions and opportunities for the development and well-being of peoples.

It is necessary to continue the restructuring process in order to consolidate a modern Organization with the capacity to adapt to current conditions and to new challenges arising out of the dynamic changes occurring in the international community. These changes, however, should be effected in accordance with the principles agreed in the relevant resolutions of the General Assembly and with the provisions of the Charter.

Central America considers that important progress has been made towards a more coherent administration of the structures and working methods of the Organization, particularly through the presentation of the Secretary-General's management plan, which is aimed at achieving better performance, greater productivity and efficiency and an allocation of resources based on predetermined strategic priorities. Special mention should be made of the Secretary-General's statement, in his report on the work of the Organization, that, within the realm of activities covered by the Economic and Social Council, new measures have been adopted for more coherent administration of operational activities carried out in conjunction with the various programmes and funds of the United Nations, including humanitarian activities.

For Central America, the subject of restructuring takes on even more importance when it is linked to operational activities for development — in particular, cooperation for the reactivation of economic growth and development in the developing countries — at a time when there is concern over the depletion of funds for this purpose, as well as fatigue on the part of the donor community because of the slow and difficult progress towards the objective of greater well-being in the international community.

In this area, it should be recalled that in the consultations held in June of this year on prospective new modalities for funding operational activities for development, the problem of a serious lack of resources for this purpose was noted. It was reiterated that contributions must continue to be characterized by neutrality, multilateralism and voluntarism, that they should be made on a secure and predictable basis and that this question should be dealt with as a matter of urgency. We support these ideas.

In this context, it is also important to take into account the commitments undertaken by States in the various international conferences held in recent years under United Nations auspices. Their implementation has been affected, especially in the developing countries, by financial difficulties, which is one more argument for the need to take measures so that the United Nations can strengthen its capacity to provide assistance in meeting the priorities and solving the problems of the international community.

It is fitting to recall that the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations states that

> "The speed and extent of change in today's world point to a future of great complexity and challenge" *(resolution 50/6)*

and that

> "following the end of the cold war, and as the end of the century approaches, we must create new opportunities for peace, development ... and cooperation." *(ibid.)*

As regards development, the Declaration points out that

> "A dynamic, vigorous, free and equitable international economic environment is essential to the well-being of humankind and to international peace, security and stability. This objective must be addressed, in greater measure and more effectively, by the United Nations system." *(ibid.)*

However, in order to dedicate itself more vigorously to this activity, it is indispensable for the United Nations to have a broad and stable financial base, as has been pointed out by the Secretary-General. In this respect, we believe it is important to reiterate our optimism regarding the clear statement made by the Heads of State and Government of the seven major industrialized countries and the President of the European Commission at the economic Summit in Halifax, in which they expressed their intention to cooperate with other countries in order to set into motion a new strategy for international cooperation and to define the specific contribution of United Nations bodies in order to improve efficiency and consistency in the economic, social, environmental and humanitarian-assistance fields. We hope that that statement will be reflected in effective support for strengthening the United Nations system and, thus, its efforts in meeting the challenges of the twenty-first century.

Another point that we think important is that of the Executive Boards. We are in favour of an assessment of the effectiveness of measures adopted to improve their working methods. This includes the possibility of revising the composition of the Boards to make them more representative, in line with the number of Members of the organization, in the same way as that principle is being applied to other United Nations bodies. We do not believe that efficiency has a direct correlation with the number of members, but, rather, with working procedures, decision-making procedures, transparency and the political will applied by States in order to attain objectives of interest to the international community at large.

We support the initiative of establishing an executive board for the United Nations Population Fund. We think not only that account should be taken of the traditional concept of equitable geographic representation, but also that an effort should be made to give smaller States and States with fewer resources the opportunity to participate.

One last aspect we think relevant is the need for efforts for genuine coordination, not only between the main organs of the United Nations — the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council — but also with the international financial institutions of Bretton Woods and the new World Trade Organization.

Since we cannot disregard the fact that the United Nations objectives cannot be achieved separately, the interdependence between political, economic, social and environmental phenomena and the promotion of human rights and democracy means that we must seek overall solutions with common areas of responsibility.

The United Nations has played an essential role in economic and social development. In spite of the efforts made, many inequalities still persist in the international community, which has been made clear in the recent global conferences. It is necessary to follow up this work in accordance with the commitments undertaken, which are closely tied to the objectives of sustainable development.

These activities, as well as the operational activities for development, deserve greater recognition and support from the United Nations — in particular, those activities to be carried out in the developing countries. Without the support of the United Nations, these activities may be largely thwarted.

Mr. Goumenny (Ukraine): First of all, the Ukrainian delegation would like to join in the expressions of gratitude to the Secretary-General for his reports on reforming the social and economic sector of the United Nations.

In our opinion, the documents prepared serve as a good basis for the current international dialogue in this Hall. It is no exaggeration to say that this is a contribution towards making the development of further, progressive transformations feasible in this important field of United Nations activities.

The results of the half-century of United Nations history, summed up recently by the international community at the Special Commemorative Meeting, testify not only to the successes of the Organization but also to the need to persist in efforts towards its restructuring and perfection.

In this context, we wish to state with satisfaction that the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council view the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields as a continuing process aimed at adapting the United Nations to the conditions of the present-day world.

It is important for us to achieve consensus on a vision of the ways and methods of implementing this process in order to achieve progress in reform activities without losing dynamism. That is why the finalization of the document entitled "An Agenda for Development" should be constructive and fruitful. It should result in the renewal of approaches to the strategy of future United Nations activities for ensuring sustainable economic growth and social development and finding new ways towards the consolidation of cooperation with institutions, including the Bretton Woods institutions, non-governmental organizations and the private sector.

First of all, we should enhance the level of coordination in the United Nations social and economic sector and lay out a clear-cut system of priorities for its activities. In our opinion, this would promote the cause of ensuring the effectiveness of the United Nations system, in response to the decisions taken at important international conferences on economic and social issues held in recent years.

In this context, we consider that the activities of the General Assembly's Second Committee and Third Committee need further rationalization and complementarity.

We support the provision of the Declaration on the Occasion of the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations on the need to strengthen the role of the Economic and Social Council as the main coordinating link of the United Nations in the social and economic fields. Extension of the range of participants and enhancement of the effectiveness of the political dialogue on the priority issues of development within the framework of the Council will promote revitalization of the processes of renewal of the Organization.

Because of the need for ensuring a coordinated approach by the United Nations system to the implementation of the decisions of important international forums, we regard the coordinating segment of the sessions of the Council as a key link in its activities.

In our opinion it is expedient, within the coordinating segment, for the annual thematic reviews of the functioning of the United Nations social and economic sector in the implementation of the outcome of such forums to be held on the priority intersectoral themes selected previously. Such reviews should be aimed at the elaboration of practical recommendations on the consolidation of cooperation between the United Nations and the Bretton Woods institutions on the most important trends of activities in the sphere of development. Reports on the results of the reviews should be submitted for further consideration by the General Assembly.

Review and readjustment of the structure of the Council's subsidiary mechanisms, as well as revision of their mandates/working methods, also seem expedient. In cooperation with its functional commissions, the Council should ensure a more precise distribution of the tasks

assigned and more thorough coordination of their long-term programmes to implement the results of the international conferences.

The delegation of Ukraine also sees high potential opportunities in the activities of the regional economic commissions. We support the views contained in the 1995 agreed conclusions of the Economic and Social Council that such commissions should play an important role in assisting countries in each region in the implementation of the recommendations of conferences held under United Nations auspices. To this end, it is our view that the parameters of clear-cut collaboration in the chain linking the Economic and Social Council to the regional commissions, the United Nations funds and programmes and the field resident coordinators should be established.

In this context we take a positive view of the results of restructuring and defining the priorities in the activities of the Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), which has accumulated considerable experience in rendering assistance to the reforms in the countries of Eastern Europe. Ukraine attaches a high value to ECE's efforts to assist the introduction of reforms in those countries and stands for expansion and deepening of the Commission's activities in this area.

Finally, the establishment of an extended Bureau of the Economic and Social Council in order to ensure the current guidance and organization of the activity of the Council between sessions would seem to be productive.

In the framework of the search for additional ways of renewing the socioeconomic sector of the United Nations, we are also ready to consider further and more radical steps in the reform of the Economic and Social Council. In my delegation's opinion, the time has come for a substantial study of the possibility of establishing a new body within the United Nations system — a council for economic security — which would be invested with wider powers and be comparable in weight and influence to the Security Council.

The President of Ukraine, Mr. Leonid Kuchma, in his statement at the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly on the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, when proposing the establishment of a council for economic security, described its major goal in the following way:

> "To identify strategic prospects for mankind's development and for preventive efforts in the decades ahead." (*Official Records of the General Assembly, Plenary Meetings, 35th meeting. p. 7*)

At the same time, it seems that the mandate of this body should cover not only monitoring, analysis and coordination of the programme of international cooperation in the economic and social fields, but also a number of other important tasks. Such tasks might include the elimination from international practice of any kind of economic aggression — in particular, exercising or threatening to exercise embargoes, boycotts, trade and financial blockades and making use of economic links in order to exercise political pressure. In this capacity, in our opinion, the council for economic security would contribute to observance of the principles of respect for national independence, non-interference in internal affairs and mutual benefit.

It is also the opinion of the delegation of Ukraine that efforts to enhance the level of inter-agency coordination should become an organic part of working practice in reforming the United Nations socio-economic sector. We believe that the capabilities of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) in this field are far from being fully utilized. It would also be important to ensure appropriate cooperation between the Committee for Programme and Coordination, the Economic and Social Council and ACC.

In conclusion, the Ukrainian delegation notes with satisfaction the positive trends in the realization of the provisions of General Assembly resolution 48/162. The spirit of consensus reached two years ago at the time of its adoption opens up good prospects for new progressive institutional changes. At the same time, it is desirable that in the future its provisions be fully implemented in all spheres, including the distribution of seats in the Executive Board of the World Food Programme.

Mr. Kasanda (Zambia): The delegation of Zambia welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on agenda item 23 "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields", contained in document A/50/697.

At the outset, my delegation would also like to associate itself with the statement by the delegation of the Philippines on behalf of the Group of 77.

We recognize that while the task of restructuring and revitalizing the United Nations in the economic and social fields is an enormous one, notable progress is

already taking place. The mandates by the General Assembly, in particular resolutions 45/264 and 48/162, are slowly being implemented. There is, however, a lot that needs to be done, especially in achieving the overall objective of this important endeavour.

While the institutional changes mandated by the resolutions I have cited are important, we should not lose sight of the overall objective which, in our view, is that the United Nations must be better placed to fulfil its role in the economic, social and related fields as mandated by the Charter. This Organization through the Economic and Social Council and its subsidiary machinery must be able to deliver effectively on development problems facing its Members States, especially the developing countries. Of primary importance in this respect is the effective implementation of the various programmes of action arising from United Nations conferences.

The Economic and Social Council must assist in validating the relevance of the United Nations with respect to global economic and social problems by being action-oriented. Effective policy-making processes and implementation are central to this process. We want to see improved coordination of the work of the Council's subsidiary machinery. Policy integration as well needs to be addressed. The functional commissions, standing bodies, ad hoc groups and expert bodies must operate in a coordinated and harmonious manner, avoiding overlaps where possible, and ensuring a clear division of responsibilities with respect to cross-cutting themes, especially in the implementation of and follow-up to development programmes.

The report of the Secretary-General has presented us with a number of proposals on policy, programme implementation and financing on which the Assembly's fiftieth session should decide in order to advance this process of restructuring.

With respect to the Economic and Social Council and its policy-development process, including the organization of its work, our views are as follows.

First, we would like to see streamlined reporting. There is so much repetition in the reporting process. Similar reports, with only minor variations, are presented to different bodies before they reach the Council. In some cases the Council simply forwards these reports to the General Assembly session with a covering note.

Secondly, it is very difficult, especially for small delegations, most of which happen to be from the least developed countries, to keep track of various layers of bodies. Strengthening the coordinating bodies, in particular the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the Joint Inspection Unit, can greatly improve the situation.

Thirdly, we would like to support the proposals in the report relating to the enhancement of the impact of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council, more especially the proposal on the high-level segment for negotiated conclusions in place of the presidential summary. The theme or themes for the high-level segment should also be selected well in advance to allow for adequate preparation.

The role of regional commissions should be equally enhanced in this process of restructuring. At times the regional commissions seem not to be properly taken into account. Their role in policy development and execution should be recognized, enhanced and properly integrated. They should also be funded adequately.

My delegation would like to see the role of ad hoc bodies and expert bodies strengthened. Nevertheless, we would like to see more transparency in their work — as much as possible. Open-ended ad hoc bodies should have their work programmes and timetables circulated in advance.

My delegation stated at the beginning of its statement that the objective and value of the restructuring process will be judged by how it impacts on programme delivery. Of particular importance in this regard is the financing of the operational activities for development. The continued decline in voluntary contributions, accompanied by unfulfilled financing commitments and targets, presents a less optimistic picture regarding the future of development cooperation.

My delegation attaches great importance to the discussions on the financing of development activities. Some recommendations, already advanced, are very important and deserve serious consideration. The financing aspect should, however, be dealt with in its entirety. The role of the Bretton Woods institutions in respect of harmonization of programmes funded through them, as well as in respect of the issue of external debt, should be discussed comprehensively. This is important especially to ensure that the finances available are commensurate with the needs of developing countries.

Lastly, the restructuring process itself requires adequate finances.

Mr. Rojas (Venezuela): Venezuela wishes to join those delegations that have supported here the need to give continuity to the important restructuring exercise initiated by resolution 45/264 and pursued through resolutions 46/235 and 48/162. In fact, we recall that process originated even earlier, particularly in decisions which were adopted by the Assembly and the Economic and Social Council in the middle of the last decade, with my delegation's active participation. It has been an incremental process, but a very fruitful one, and we believe now is the appropriate time to bring it to its successful conclusion.

We therefore support the idea that, on the basis of the Secretary-General's recommendation contained in his report in document A/50/697 and complemented by proposals made by delegations, the Assembly should adopt at this session a new draft resolution on this item which consolidates, broadens and improves what has already been agreed to in connection with the principal organs, subsidiary organs and other bodies and entities of the system; operational activities, including the funding aspect; and inter-agency coordination.

Many speakers have expressed concern here about the question of the mandate, including institutional aspects, given the special Working Group now considering the preparation of "An Agenda for Development", and the mandate's possible overlapping or duplication with the exercise we are now considering. Although the problem certainly exists, we share the opinion that the process we are considering here today of the follow-up to resolution 48/162 and prior resolutions is a process with a life of its own which should take its natural course. Furthermore, we believe that ideally the resolution we adopt on the subject should be finalized before the resumption of the work of the Working-Group on the Agenda for Development, so that the resolution can serve as a reference point and a useful tool for the group. Here we may be confining ourselves to improvements in the working methods of the various mechanisms of the system in the economic and social spheres. In the Working Group on the Agenda for Development, and possibly also in the recently established Working Group on the strengthening of the United Nations, we will be talking about much deeper institutional changes.

One area in which all of this is highlighted is the relationship between the United Nations and the international financial and commercial organisms, including the Bretton Woods institutions and the World Trade Organization.

The Working Group on an Agenda for Development has a clear mandate to propose changes to the *status quo* in order to arrive at a more organic and coordinated relationship among these entities, and indeed we hope that this can be accomplished. But this should not prevent us, in the context of our discussion of agenda item 23, from recommending specific operational measures that would contribute to making these relationships increasingly effective and fruitful.

The question of the Economic and Social Council is the other topic of fundamental importance that will necessarily be considered at different levels by each of the forums and Working Groups mentioned earlier. Venezuela, which contributed to the drafting of the San Francisco Charter, has always been a firm defender of the Council's role within the system and of the crucial functions assigned to it by the Charter in Chapters IX and X, and in particular in Articles 62 and 63. Today more than ever, we believe that a genuine revitalization and transformation of the Economic and Social Council is the only way not only to accomplish what has so far remained undone, but also to bring definitively into the realm of the United Nations the important international discussion of the fundamental issues of economic and social cooperation, including the coordination of macro-economic policies. The Council can well be the ideal forum for a revitalized and dynamic North-South dialogue on questions of international economic cooperation and coordination. There is no need to invent anything new, much less to consider resorting to mechanisms outside the United Nations system, for this purpose.

For all of these reasons, we are completely open-minded on this subject, and we welcome the fact that a series of innovative proposals have been put forward on resolutions that would make the Council more operational, wide-ranging and credible. This includes in particular the ideas that were presented last year during the hearings on development and reflected in reports submitted on this subject by, respectively, the President of the General Assembly and the Secretary-General. We note with satisfaction that some of these ideas are again referred to by the Secretary-General in the report (A/50/697) he submitted to us on the agenda item under consideration today.

Mr. Lakatos (Hungary): It is an honour and a privilege for me to address the Assembly on the item "Restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields", on behalf of the Republic of Hungary.

We are particularly pleased with today's extensive and constructive dialogue, which has proved the common and shared responsibility, the general interest and the multitude of views of the Member States concerning the United Nations reform.

Being the last speaker today, I have to respond positively to your invitation, Sir, to respect the time limit for statements. Therefore I intend to be very brief, and I will refrain from making a detailed presentation on behalf of my delegation.

By the same token, I should like to place on record that my delegation fully supports the statement made by the representative of Spain on behalf of the European Union and that Hungary shares the opinion expressed by the European Union.

My delegation has followed this debate with the utmost interest, and we welcome the important statement by the representative of the United States. We underline the importance of further careful and successful structural changes in the United Nations family in order to achieve greater effectiveness of the United Nations in the economic and social fields.

In the year of the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations, and only a few weeks after the Special Commemorative Meeting of the General Assembly, the Member States rightly expect the United Nations to be capable of responding effectively to the most pressing global problems. The restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations must serve this goal.

We agree that these proposals open a real window of opportunity for a more productive relationship among the various United Nations organs dealing with the economic and social fields.

The importance of the item under consideration and the long list of questions asked today by delegations show clearly that this topic deserves careful examination in the near future as well. Today we took a further step in that direction.

At the end of a long day, full of ideas on how to make our activities concerning the restructuring and revitalization of the United Nations in the economic, social and related fields more fruitful, I do not wish to forget one very important factor related directly to the item under consideration. Let me take this opportunity to express the appreciation of my delegation to the staff of the United Nations and of the specialized agencies — all those men and women working with devotion and commendable results towards our common endeavours.

The Acting Chairman: We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

We have thus concluded this stage of our consideration of agenda item 23.

Programme of work

The Acting President: I should like to inform Members that agenda item 43, entitled "Cooperation between the United Nations and the Organization of African Unity", which was scheduled for Monday 20 November 1995, in the afternoon, will now be considered at a later date to be announced.

I should also like to inform the Assembly that agenda item 38, entitled "The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti", which was scheduled for Tuesday, 21 November 1995, in the afternoon, will also be considered at a later date to be announced.

The meeting rose at 5.20 p.m.